

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6720

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1485

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY REORGANIZES

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: SEOUL 1408

1. YU CHIN- SAN WAS REINSTATED AS NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) LEADER AT MAR 11 MEETING OF PARTY' S CENTRAL STANDING COMMITTEE, WHICH UNANIMOUSLY REJECTED THE RESIGNATION WHICH HE HAD SUBMITTED IN JANUARY. AGREEMENT ON YU' S RETURN WAS REACHED AT MAR 10 MEETING OF YU, ACTING PARTY LEADER CHONG IL- HYONG, AND MAJOR FACTION LEADERS YI CHOL- SUNG AND KIM YONG- SAM. IT IS WIDELY UNDERSTOOD THAT IN RETURN FOR AGREEING TO YU' S RETURN, CHONG WAS TO BE OFFERED POSITION AS NDP ASSEMBLY VICE SPEAKER, ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION TO THIS HAS NOW DEVELOPED WITHIN PARTY. PRESS HAS ALSO REPORTED THAT PARTY' S POWERFUL POLITICAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL WILL BE REVAMPED TO INCLUDE CHONG AS A VICE CHAIRMAN, ALONG WITH YI AND KIM. YU CHIN- SAN, AS PARTY LEADER, CHAIRS THE COUNCIL.

2. SINCE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, A NEW FACTIONAL LINEUP HAS EVOLVED WITHIN THE NDP. YU, OF COURSE,
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DOMINATES THE PARTY AND COMMANDS THE LARGEST PERSONAL FACTION. YI CHOL- SUNG AND KIM YONG- SAM REMAIN RIVALS TO EVENTUALLY SUCCEED YU. FOR THE MOMENT YI IS YU ' S CLOSEST MAJOR ALLY, WHILE KIM IS LESS CLOSE, HAVING OPPOSED YU' S RETURN TO POWER LAST YEAR. THESE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE PARTY' S " MAINSTREAM" ARE BASED ON THE USUAL PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS. CHONG IL- HYONG IS ACCEPTED LEADER OF THE " ANTI- MAINSTREAM" FACTION, NOW A SMALL GROUP WHICH CONSISTS OF THE REMNANTS OF KIM TAE- CHUNG' S FOLLOWERS, WHOSE WEAKNESS WAS ILLUSTRATED BY CHONG' S AGREEMENT TO YU CHIN- SAN' S RETURN TO POWER.

3. COMMENT: PERSONAL RIVALRIES WILL PROBABLY PERSIST WITHIN THE NDP, BUT YU' S POWER SEEMS SECURE. WHEN CHONG IL- HYONG CHALLENGED YU' S LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY IN JANUARY, YU WAS OFTEN DESCRIBED TO US PRIVATELY BY CLOSE OBSERVERS AS THE GOVERNMENT' S PREFERRED CANDIDATE FOR THE POST.

UNDERHILL

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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